

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 575

By Sargent

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Mr. Lauren C. Steele of Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated for his illustrious career in government and corporate relations.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly salute those sterling individuals who have been involved in government service, government relations, and the overall business that creates commerce in this State; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person is Lauren C. Steele, a noteworthy member of the third house of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, an Auburn, Alabama, native, Mr. Steele is the youngest of Dr. H. Elsworth Steele and the late Lilah Jensen Steele's three children; and

WHEREAS, a proud Alabamian and Tiger, Mr. Steele graduated from Auburn University with a degree in journalism and political science; and

WHEREAS, while attending Auburn and after graduating, Mr. Steele worked as a television reporter for the Alabama Public Television Network and reported on the activities of the Alabama Legislature; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the skill and talents of Mr. Steele, former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice and United States Senator Howell Heflin employed Mr. Steele as his press secretary, taking him from Alabama to Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Mr. Steele married Fran Stromei of Mobile, Alabama, and their love match has produced two beautiful daughters; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Steele is the proud father of his older daughter, Laura Steele Walsh, and her husband, Austin Ryan Walsh, and grandfather of their two daughters, Charlotte Jensen Walsh and Rose Taylor Walsh; and

WHEREAS, he is equally proud of his younger daughter, Jenny Steele Johnson, and her husband, Daniel Jedidiah Johnson, and their son, James Pascal Johnson; and

WHEREAS, while in Washington, D.C., Mr. Steele came in contact with the titans of U.S. business and the major corporations of this great nation; and

WHEREAS, it was at this time in 1982 that he came in contact with representatives of The Coca-Cola Company, that highly recognizable international corporation of Atlanta, Georgia, and was asked to join their government relations department; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Mr. J. Frank Harrison III, formerly of Chattanooga and chairman of the board of Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated, asked Mr. Steele to move to Charlotte, North Carolina, and help enhance the company's corporate affairs as vice president; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Steele was later promoted to senior vice president of corporate affairs for Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated; and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Day Weekend NASCAR Coca-Cola 600 Race has been sponsored by Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated and The Coca-Cola Company for fifty-three years; and

WHEREAS, since 1990, Lauren Steele has been responsible for trophy announcement ceremonies, starters, and honorary participants from the governmental community; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has been well represented at the Coca-Cola 600 with the participation of former State Representative Matt Kisber, Governor Don Sundquist, United States Majority Leader Bill Frist, Governor Phil Bredesen, Tennessee's first female Speaker of the House, the Honorable Beth Harwell, and the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the Senate Ron Ramsey; and

WHEREAS, the Miss Tennessee Pageant held annually in Jackson recognized Mr. Steele by asking him to be a judge at the 1994 pageant; and

WHEREAS, having spent many quiet, unseen hours in Tennessee on behalf of the interests of his company, Lauren Steele was made an Honorary Tennessean by Governor Ned Ray McWherter; and

WHEREAS, Lauren Steele recognized the unique qualities and business acumen of Governor McWherter and encouraged Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated to place the former governor on its board of directors, in which position Governor McWherter served for ten years; and

WHEREAS, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated has recently acquired much of East Tennessee as part of its franchise territory, and Mr. Steele saw fading painted Coca-Cola "ghost signs" on the sides of buildings and has been instrumental in restoring those signs in Morristown, Johnson City, Knoxville, and Cookeville; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to pause in their deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Lauren Steele for his contributions to his company, which has a long and proud Tennessee history, his family, his friends, and the soft drink industry in Tennessee and the South, as he prepares to retire; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Lauren C. Steele for his noteworthy career and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.